

3 Israelis Slain by Palestinians in Cyprus

By MARGARET L. ROGG

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LARNACA, Cyprus, Sept. 25 — Palestinian gunmen stormed a small private yacht moored in the marina of this bustling tourist port shortly before dawn this morning and killed three Israelis aboard it in the course of a siege that lasted nearly 10 hours.

The three assailants, armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles, pistols and hand grenades, held Cypriot policemen and antiterrorist units at bay throughout the morning and early afternoon before surrendering.

The police said the gunmen had demanded the release of some 20 Palestinians whom Israeli Navy patrols captured in boats in two recent incidents. The Israeli Government has said the captured guerrillas had intended to launch attacks against Israel.

The victims of the attack today were identified by Cypriot officials as Reuben Palzur; his wife, Esther, and Abraham Anvery, all Israeli citizens who had sailed here as tourists from the Israeli port of Haifa on Sept. 16.

Guerrillas' Identities Unclear

Hours after the siege ended, it was not clear exactly who the attackers were. The Cypriot Interior Minister, Dinos Michaelides, would not identify them except to say they were Palestinians "who do not belong to any organization of the Palestinian people."

"So far, we don't know where they came from," Mr. Michaelides said.

In Jerusalem, an anonymous caller told a Western news agency that the attack had been carried out by Force 17, an elite commando unit of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The caller asserted that the slain Israelis had been intelligence agents posing as tourists in order to monitor activity in Larnaca harbor. The two vessels seized by the Israelis last month while carrying Palestinian guerrillas both had reportedly set sail from Cyprus.

But P.L.O. officials in Cyprus denied the assailants were affiliated with the P.L.O. or that the P.L.O. was involved in the attack.

Early Morning Attack

The police said the gunmen stormed aboard the 38-foot sailboat at about 4:30 A.M. while it was anchored in the Larnaca tourist marina, which is packed with pleasure boats from around the eastern Mediterranean at this time of year.

Witnesses said shots and screams echoed throughout the marina as the terrorists took the sleeping Israelis by surprise.

According to the police, the Israelis put up a struggle and Mrs. Palzur, the first to be killed, apparently tried to fend off the attackers with a knife.

She tried to escape, scrambling through the forward hatch and onto the deck, where she was shot several times.

What happened next is not yet clear, according to Cypriot officials. But they said they believe that Mr. Palzur and Mr. Anvery were kept alive for several hours, to be used as hostages so the assailants could bargain to be allowed to go to the Larnaca airport, and, presumably, to leave the country.

The two Israeli men were still believed to be alive as late as 7 A.M., when policemen on shore, several hundred yards away, said they were last seen. Negotiations with the gunmen continued throughout the morning.

The deaths of the two were discovered only after the Palestinians surrendered, shortly before 2 P.M., when officials boarded the boat for the first time. They found the Israelis, bound and shot several times in the back of their heads.

Early in negotiations, the terrorists demanded to see the Egyptian Ambassador, who drove down from the Cypriot capitol, Nicosia, to try to help defuse the situation.

Two representatives of the P.L.O. in Nicosia also arrived to try to negotiate but the terrorists, according to witnesses, became agitated and shouted at them to leave because, they said, they did not want to talk to anyone from the P.L.O.

At one point, the terrorists set a 10 A.M. deadline and threatened to blow up the boat. But the deadline passed and negotiations continued.

At 1:55 P.M., three gunmen — two dark-haired and one with sandy blonde

hair — emerged from the cabin, fired a few rounds into the water and then threw down their weapons. One blew kisses to the crowd on shore as they climbed onto the pier to surrender to the Cypriot police.